

**ST. MICHAEL-ALBERTVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MINNESOTA GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 24, 2022) — In its 37th year of honoring the nation’s best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Ali Weimer** of **St. Michael-Albertville High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Minnesota Girls Cross Country Player of the Year**. Weimer is the first Gatorade Minnesota Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from St. Michael-Albertville High School.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the field, distinguishes Weimer as Minnesota’s best high school girls cross country player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Cross Country Player of the Year award to be announced in February, Weimer joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Lukas Verzbicas (2010-11 & 2009-10, Carl Sandburg High School, Orland Park, Ill.), Megan Goethals (2009-10, Rochester High School, Rochester Hills, Mich.), Jordan Hasay (2008-09, Mission College Preparatory Catholic High School, San Luis Obispo, Calif.) and Chris Derrick (2007-08, Neuqua Valley High School, Naperville, Ill.).

The 5-foot-4 senior won the Class AAA state meet this past season with a time of 17:42.81, breaking the tape 14.29 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor and leading the Knights to a fourth-place finish as a team. Weimer won the in-season Roy Griak Invitational as well as the postseason Nike Cross Nationals Heartland Regional Championships. She took second at the Eastbay Midwest Regional Championships and capped her year with an 11th-place finish at the national Eastbay Cross Country Championships, to earn All-American honors.

Weimer has volunteered locally as the student manager of the STMA girls hockey team. She has also donated her time as a youth hockey coach. “Ali is an incredible runner and positive leader for our team,” said Matt Venaas, head coach of St. Michael-Albertville High School. “She has continued to progress in her five years running on our team. On the course, she does an excellent job understanding how she can run her best race that day.”

Weimer has maintained a 3.89 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at the University of Minnesota this fall.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one winner in the District of Columbia and each of the 50 states that sanction high school football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, boys and girls soccer, baseball, softball, and boys and girls track & field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, which leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as sources to help evaluate and determine the state winners in each sport.

Weimer joins recent Gatorade Minnesota Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Analee Weaver (2020-21 & 2019-20, Stillwater Area High School), Emily Covert (2018-19, Washburn High School), and Tierney Wolfgram (2017-18, Math & Science Academy), among the state’s list of former award winners.

Gatorade has a long-standing history of serving athlete communities and understands how sports instill valuable lifelong skills on and off the field. Through Gatorade’s “Play it Forward” platform, Weimer has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national organization of their choosing that helps young athletes realize the benefits of playing sports. Weimer is also eligible to submit a short video explaining why the organization they chose is deserving of one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants, which will be announced throughout the year. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners’ grants have totaled more than \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 organizations.

Since the program’s inception in 1985, Gatorade Player of the Year award recipients have won hundreds of professional and college championships, and many have also turned into pillars in their communities, becoming coaches, business owners and educators.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit playeroftheyear.gatorade.com or follow us on social media on Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY, Instagram at instagram.com/Gatorade and Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.

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